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ABSTRACT

This student reference in career and personal development is designed to accompany the lessons outlined in the instructor's guide for a plant science core curriculum. Five lessons cover career planning; finding information about available jobs; applying and interviewing for a job; developing as a confident, responsible person; and developing better human relations. Each lesson provides informative materials, a summary, and a reference to the source of the information. (YLB)

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STUDENT REFERENCE

CAREER AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

FOR

PLANT SCIENCE CORE CURRICULUM

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FOREWORD

This student reference in Career and Personal Development is designed to accompany the lessons outlined in the Instructor's Guide in Career and Personal Development, a part of the Plant Science curriculum. It would also be of value to those seeking an understanding of choosing a career, getting a job, personal development, and human relations.

The reference is divided into five lessons - Lesson 1 on career planning; Lesson 2 on finding information about available jobs; Lesson 3 on applying and interviewing for a job; Lesson 4 on developing as a confident, responsible person; and Lesson 5 on developing better human relations. You may refer to the Table of Contents for page numbers of specific topics.

Persons using this reference on an individual basis may wish to secure a copy of the Instructor's Guide for additional materials on Career and Personal Development.

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CAREER AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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UNIT - CAREER AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Lesson 1: What should I consider when making career plans?

Some people know very early in life what they want to do for their life's work. Others change their minds several times before settling on a career. Still others change jobs throughout their working life, never settling on any one job.

Making a career choice early in life has some advantages in that a person can organize education and work experience to prepare for that career. Making that choice intelligently is easier if you are informed.

In the Careers unit in Animal Science, you studied the broad areas of careers available in the field of agriculture to help make an intelligent career choice. This unit concentrates on getting and keeping a job to gain work experience in your chosen career.

Studying Career Plans Is Important

Choosing a career is one of the most important decisions that anyone makes during a lifetime. Many things during a person's life are determined by the choice of a career, including lifestyle, health, happiness, and more. What you do in the next few years in your choice of a career, training for that career, and work experience will have a profound effect on the rest of your life.

Some of the consequences of your choice of careers include:

1. Whether you will be employed or unemployed. Some jobs are seasonal in nature. Others employ workers all year round. These jobs tend to be more stable and offer job security so that you may be employed when others are out of work.

Some jobs are seasonal.

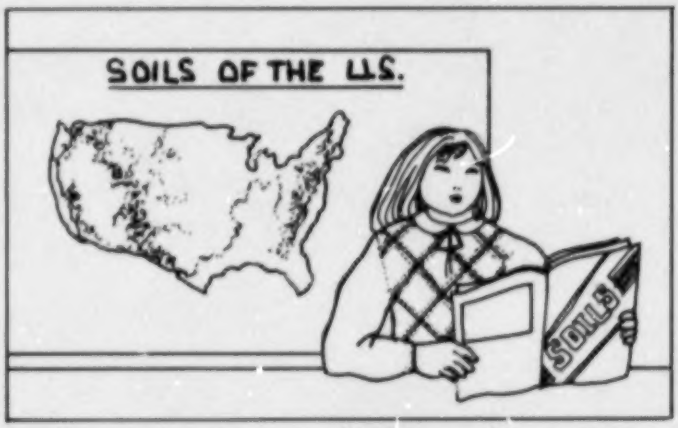
2. Whether you will like or dislike your work. It is important to choose a career that is well suited to your own interests and capabilities so that you can be happy in your work. Sometimes, people will choose a job primarily because it offers more money. These people may become disillusioned and be unhappy if the job does not fit their capabilities. They are usually chronic complainers and eventually their health may suffer - all because they do not like their job.

Will you enjoy your working conditions?

3. Your friends and associates. You will probably become friends with many of the people you work with. It is natural for people with similar interests to associate with each other.

4. Your working conditions. You should give careful consideration to the fact that much of your adult life will be spent on the job. The working conditions of the career should be important to you as you make your career choice. Will you be operating dangerous machinery? Handling dangerous chemicals? Breathing pollutants? All of these questions should be considered.

5. Your place of residence. You will probably live in an area close to where you work. Your career may influence where you live because of job availability or other factors. Some people prefer to live in certain areas of the country. You will need to consider your preferences on where you like to live when making a choice on a career.



Your choice of careers will influence where you live.

6. The amount of leisure time available to you. Occupations vary in the amount of leisure time available. Many companies have uniform policies concerning vacations. Self-employed people, like farmers and others who own their own businesses, can set their own work schedule.

Some jobs allow more leisure time than others.

7. Your standard of living. The income produced from your work must be considered when making a career choice. Some occupations require years of training before entering the job market, then reward you later with a higher income. Other jobs require less training, but result in lower yearly income. You should consider both the income and training required when choosing a career.

8. Your security during retirement. Will your job provide you with a pension during retirement? If not, will the income be high enough while your are working that you can set some money aside for retirement?

9. Your health and happiness. The type of work you do will directly affect your health and happiness. Some occupations require a great deal of heavy physical activity; others require working in hazardous conditions. These factors should also be considered when choosing a career.

Will your choice of careers give you security when you retire?

Why People Work

When most people are asked the question, "Why do people work?", the first thing most think of is earning money. They are right to a certain degree, but what about the people who say, "I would not trade my job for any job in the world."? Is it because they are highly paid? Of course not. People work for many different reasons, including:

Livelihood. People work to earn a livelihood. This provides the basic essentials - food, clothing, and shelter -for themselves and their dependents. Once these needs have been met, other needs become important.

Human relationships. People are social animals by nature. That is, people like to associate with other people. Work provides a means of associating with others who have similar interests. In addition, working through a group gives people a sense of belonging.

Personal development. Work can also provide opportunities for learning and growth, both intellectually and socially. It is a way of reaching new goals and acquiring new skills. Your work can help you grow and reach your fullest potential.

Job satisfaction. You and your family will be happier if you choose a job that will provide satisfaction.

Service. People like to create new products, make quality products, provide useful services, and make a contribution to the community and the country. People like to feel that their work is important and is of service to others.

Security. People look for security in an occupation. They want to know that when they come to work tomorrow there will be a job for them. This security provides the stability needed before realistic, effective planning for the future can be done.

Success. Your work can provide you opportunities for success through job advancement and increased income. This can provide a sense of accomplishment and a sense of personal worth from a job well done.

Happiness. If you have chosen carefully, your career can provide you with a great deal of enjoyment. This can contribute to your overall happiness.

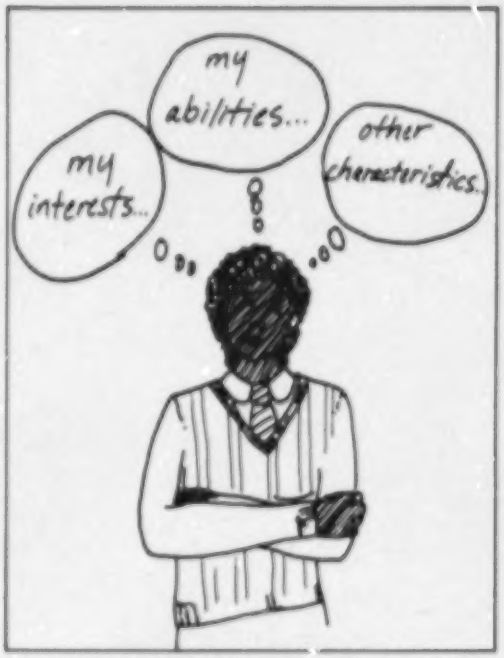
Steps to Choosing a Career

Choosing your career early in life may be no better than a choice made later in life. However, an early choice, even if it is changed later, can give some direction to your life and your studies. If you know where you want to go, you can plan how to get there. Here are some logical steps you can follow when choosing a career or revising your career choice:

1. Consider your interests, abilities, and other characteristics. Look carefully at what you like to do. This may suggest general areas of occupations you can investigate further. Be honest with yourself about your strong and weak points.

2. Narrow the field of jobs in which you are interested to several choices. After you have assessed your own interests, you can narrow your choices. In most occupational areas, there will be several groups of related occupations that will match your interests and abilities. Your first choice can be subject to change, but it can be a starting point for planning a career.

3. Study the requirements, working conditions, and other characteristics of these jobs. Study each occupation carefully and become familiar with all the facts. Poor choices of careers are sometimes made because of inadequate information or misunderstanding the facts.



What you like to do may help you decide what career to choose.

4. Make a choice which matches your personal characteristics with a job. Compare what the occupation requires with what you have to offer. Do not overestimate or underestimate yourself, but do not be afraid to stretch yourself and take on a challenge.

5. Plan for alternative occupations. Your first choice might not work out. Try to anticipate what you can do if it does not. All occupations have related occupations. Determine the occupations related to your choice and be prepared to enter one of those if the first choice does not work out.

6. Prepare a plan for career preparation. Plan ahead so that you are ready when the time comes for you to go to work. If the job requires special training, plan to obtain that training.

Setting Up a Plan for Career Preparation

Some of the important parts which might be included in a plan for career preparation include arranging for special courses in high school, obtaining part-time work experience while you are still in high school, and planning for additional education beyond high school.

Educational planning is an important part of any plan for career preparation. Will you need a background in science for the job? You may need to take as much biology, chemistry, and math in high school as you can. Will you need oral or written communications skills? You can take speech courses and English courses as well as working on public speaking in Vocational Agriculture and the FFA.

Getting work experience is also important for career preparation. Direct work experience in the occupation you desire is best, but you may have to select another job because of insurance requirements, legal requirements, or job availability. If, for example, you cannot get a job working as an agricultural mechanic, you could gain valuable background through a related job, such as working for a farmer. This job would allow you to work with machinery, etc. and may get you valuable experience in machinery maintenance and repair.

Summary

Choosing an occupation is one of the most important decisions a person can make because the choice will have a profound effect on later life. Employment or unemployment, like or dislike of your work, friends, working conditions, where you live, the amount of leisure time available, standard of living, retirement security, and health and happiness are all affected by the choice of an occupation. People work for many reasons, not just for the money. It is important that a job meet their needs. When choosing a career, consider first your own interests, abilities, and other characteristics. Narrow the field of jobs down to several choices for further study. From this study, match a job with your personal characteristics. However, it is best to plan some alternatives in case your first choice does not work out. Then prepare your personal plan for career preparation. This plan could include such things as arranging to take special courses in high school, getting on-the-job work experience as a part of your supervised occupational experience program in vocational agriculture, and planning for additional education beyond high school.

Credit:

Carlile, Robert B. Careers in Agriculture. Columbia, MO: Instructional Materials Laboratory (University of Missouri-Columbia), 1976.

Lesson 2: Where can I find information about available jobs?

Once you have identified the type of work that matches with your background, preparation, and likes and dislikes, you need to look for a job that will give you more experience in that field.

Ways to find information about available jobs

Information can be found in many places. Direct contact with a firm hiring people in the occupational area in which you are interested is one way of obtaining job information. A daily check of the classified advertisements in the newspaper will give a general idea of what jobs are available. Employers seeking employees with specific skills often list position openings with school placement offices and public or private employment services. (Private employment services usually charge a fee for their help.) Your personal contacts - teachers, parents, friends, and neighbors - can also be a source of job information. Let them know what type of job you are looking for. They may have heard of job openings or may be able to give you background information about specific firms. One important thing to remember is that an employer may not use all of the ways listed above to distribute information about job openings. Use several of these ways to find information about available jobs or you may not find the type of work you want.

Classified advertisements can be one source of information about jobs.

The quickest way to determine job availability

The quickest way to determine job availability is to contact the manager or employment office of a firm for which you would like to work.

Summary

There are many different sources of information about available jobs, including direct contact with a firm, classified advertisements, the school placement office, public or private employment services, and personal contacts, such as teachers, parents, friends, and neighbors. Use of a variety of these sources should provide the information necessary to find the type of work experience you want. Directly contacting the manager or employment office of a firm is usually the quickest way to determine job availability.

The school placement office may have information about jobs available locally.

Credit:

Stewart, Bob R. Leadership for Agricultural Industry. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978.

Lesson 3: How do I apply and interview for a job?

Once potential jobs have been located, the next step is to try to land the job. How each firm handles the hiring of new employees varies, but most require some type of application and personal interview process. Proper preparation for this process should give you a better chance of getting the job you want.

Applying for the Job

There are definite steps to follow when applying for a job. First, prepare a personal data sheet. A personal data sheet introduces you to the employer. Often employers will ask prospective employees to first send in personal data sheets or resumes; then select the persons to interview from those personal data sheets. Only those potential employees with the most promising personal data sheets will be interviewed. When preparing a personal data sheet, keep it neat, accurate, and as specific as possible. Personal data sheets should be typed. A well-prepared personal data sheet can get your foot in the door for the job; a poorly prepared one can lose you the chance.

Keep in touch with the employer until a decision is made.

Next, contact the employer to set up an appointment for an interview. Some employers prefer to be called, but this contact may also be by letter or in person. Think carefully about what you want to say before contacting the employer. The employer may give you a job application to be completed and brought to the interview. Fill out the application completely, as neatly as possible. If some items on the application do not apply to you, write "not applicable" in the blanks.

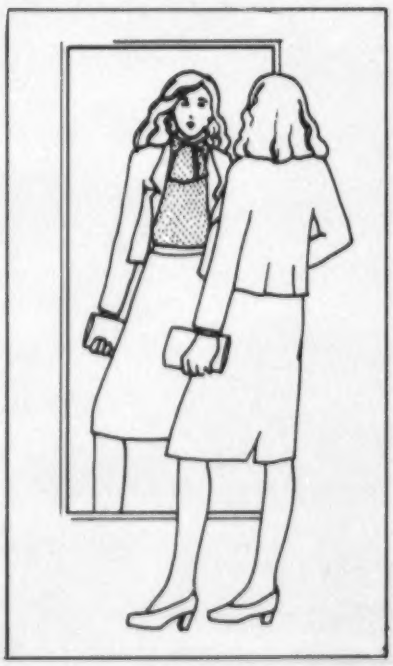
The next step is the interview with the employer. The interview is your chance to persuade the employer to hire you. Prepare for the interview so that you make the best impression. Try to prepare for questions that will likely be asked, so that you have answers ready. Don't be upset if the interviewer asks a surprise question or an intimidating question. Such questions are designed to test your reactions. When the interview is over, thank the interviewer for his/her time and express a strong interest in the job.

Finally, follow up on the interview. Even if you are not offered a job immediately, keep in touch with the employer until the decision is made. Wait until a reasonable length of time has passed before contacting the employer. A thank you letter after the interview is also a good idea.

The Personal Data Sheet

The personal data sheet is your introduction to a prospective employer. Important types of information to be included are your current address and telephone number, personal information, educational background, activities, work experience, and references. If you have one phone number where you can be reached during the day in addition to your home phone, list both numbers and designate which is which. Personal information needed on your personal data sheet includes your age, general health, and birthdate. When listing educational background, a listing of specific skills you can do will mean more than a general job description. Be as complete as possible when listing your activities. Include all offices, responsibilities, and awards. When listing work experience, list the jobs with the most recent first, then the next most recent, etc. Two to three references should be adequate for the personal data sheet. Include current addresses for the persons listed as references. References should be people other than close relatives who have some knowledge of you and your work habits. Some possible references include former employers, your vocational agriculture instructor, other teachers, your high school principal or guidance counselor, your minister or Sunday School teacher, or an officer at your bank with which you have had dealings. Before listing someone as a reference, you owe them the courtesy of asking if you may list them as a reference.

A carefully prepared personal data sheet will provide a good introduction to an employer.



Give yourself the mirror test.

How to Dress for the Interview

How will you appear?

You are not ready for a personal interview until you have done certain "homework."

Give yourself a mirror test. Stand in front of a full-length mirror to see whether you have that "employable" look. Could you pass under close scrutiny of the interviewer; or do you have a split seam somewhere, or uncombed hair, runover heels, unpolished shoes, or dirty hands?

Are the colors you are wearing in harmony, or do the colors clash? Do your clothes look as if they belonged to you, or do they look "borrowed"? Are they appropriate for the occasion - for the office and not for a party? Are they appropriate for bending and stooping? for sitting at a desk? while taking notes? for meeting the public?

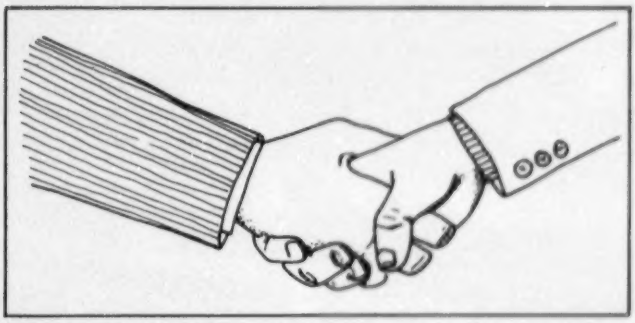
Your appearance should be such that the employer could say, "Sit down at this desk. We will be proud to introduce you as our new employee."

When you are satisfied that your appearance will be an asset to you, then put all concern for your appearance from your mind, at least until after your interview. Much of self-consciousness, which is definitely not desirable, comes from being overconscious of your appearance. You must be able to take your mind off yourself and think about the person with whom you are talking and about the subjects under discussion.

Pointers to Remember When Interviewing for a Job

The following are some pointers to remember when you interview for a job.

1. Make a last-minute check of personal appearance before leaving home.
2. Go to the interview unaccompanied.
3. Allow yourself plenty of time to arrive for the interview.
4. Maintain a pleasant attitude toward the receptionist.
5. Do not be impatient or show signs of nervousness if kept waiting for the interview.



A firm handshake helps to make a good impression.

6. Greet the interviewer with a warm smile.
7. Call the interviewer by name.
8. Shake the interviewer's hand firmly.
9. Be seated only after interviewer asks you to.
10. Sit and stand erectly; don't lean against the wall, a chair, or a desk.
11. Don't put your belongings on the interviewer's desk.
12. Let the employer take the lead in the conversation.
13. Answer all questions completely.

14. Be polite and courteous - do not interrupt!

15. Have a personal data sheet and examples of work available for quick reference.

16. Make an extra effort to express yourself clearly - take time to think through your answers, use appropriate language, don't swear, avoid the use of slang, and look the interviewer in the eye.

17. Be sincere and enthusiastic.

18. Avoid smoking, chewing gum, eating candy, giggling, and squirming in the chair.

19. Don't try to flatter the interviewer.

20. Tell the truth about yourself and your experiences.

21. Speak well of former employers and associates.

22. Be positive.

23. Watch for a sign that the interview is over.

24. Thank the interviewer for his or her time.

25. Leave promptly.

If you do not get the job, these might be some of the reasons:

1. Poor grooming habits

2. Poor character - chip on your shoulder, bad attitude toward work, overly emotional, late for the interview, belittled previous employers and acquaintances

3. Sloppy writing on application blank - didn't follow directions, didn't answer all questions, didn't write clearly

4. Did not tell the truth

5. Overly fussy about working conditions

6. Poor school records, bad grades, too many absences or tardies

If you did not get the job....

Possible Interview Questions

The following are examples of questions commonly asked during job interviews. If you prepare answers for these questions, there will probably be fewer questions you will have to answer off the top of your head.

Questions About You:

1. Tell me about yourself . . . about your family.
2. Where did you go to school? Did you graduate?
3. Did you earn any of your own expense money while you were in school?
4. Are you in good health?
5. What jobs have you held? How did you get them? Why did you leave each one?
6. Where do you live?
7. What are your hobbies? How do you spend your spare time?
8. What have you done which shows you have initiative and can accept responsibility?
9. What books have you read lately? What magazines and/or newspapers do you read regularly?
10. Is it an effort for you to be tolerant of persons with backgrounds and interests different from your own?

Questions About Your Job Training:

1. Did you take a vocational program in high school or in a technical school?
2. In what subject did you make your best grades? Your poorest grades?
3. What kinds of job experiences have you had which you feel are especially valuable to you?
4. What is your chosen field of work? Are there "job hazards" (either physical or psychological) in your chosen field? If there are, name one or two.
5. If necessary, would you be willing to be retrained?
6. How would you rate your training for this job?
   Very Good ____ Good ____ Fair ____
7. Do you have any plans for continuing your studies while on the job? Why or why not?

8. What extracurricular activities did you participate in at school? Why were they worth the time you spent?

9. What are your own special abilities?

10. Do you think it's fair for an employer to consider grades and/or school attendance when evaluating an applicant? Why or why not?

Question About the Job:

1. What kind of job do you want?

2. Do you want temporary or permanent work?

3. Why did you decide you wanted this kind of job?

4. Why do you think you want to work for this company?

5. What skills or qualifications do you have that make you think you can do the job?

6. How much money do you think you should get for this job?

7. Do you have a specific job or goal you want to work towards?

8. What personal characteristics and what kind of performance records do you think are needed to succeed in your vocation?

9. Would you be willing to move to another neighborhood, or even to another city, if the job required it?

10. Do you like to work with other people or do you work best alone?

Questions to Ask During the Interview

If you have some questions about the job or the company, ask the interviewer. For example, you should find out about fringe benefits, the chances for advancement, and training opportunities offered to employees. Do not be concerned just with the amount of money you will be paid for the job. Working conditions, and the people you will be working with, are also important. The interviewer may cover these points as a part of the interview. However, if these points are not clear or were not covered, ask questions about them.

What to do After the Interview

You may be offered a job at the end of the interview. If so, you may ask for a few days to think over what you learned in the interview before making your decision. Ask when the decision is needed and promise to call with a decision by that time.

If a job offer is not forthcoming at the end of the interview, follow up the interview with a short thank you letter which states your continued interest in the job and offers more information if needed. If you do not hear from the interviewer within a reasonable time, you may call and ask about the outcome of the interview. If the interviewer gave you a specific time period in which the decision was to be made, wait until that time has passed before calling. Ask if you are still being considered and express your continued interest in the job.

Summary

Through careful preparation, you can enhance your chances of getting the job you want. Prepare a personal data sheet to introduce yourself to the employer. Contact the employer to set up an appointment for an interview. Dress neatly and appropriately for the interview. Before going to the interview, try to anticipate the questions to be asked so that you can be prepared. Answer questions completely and truthfully. Follow up on the interview after the interview is over.

Credit:

Stewart, Bob R. Leadership for Agricultural Industry. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978.

Lesson 4: How can I develop as a confident, responsible person?

How do employers choose whom to hire? Put yourself in that employer's shoes for a moment. What would you look for? The chances are that you would look for the most confident person who has shown through prior work and activities that he or she can accept responsibility and carry through with it.

So, what can you do to improve your chances of being the one selected? What must be done is improving your personal leadership. You know what your personal strengths and weaknesses are. To improve, you must build on your strengths and strengthen your weaknesses. Only you can make the decision to do this; no one can improve your leadership qualities for you.

Personal Characteristics Employers Look for in People They Hire

Every person is a mixture of characteristics. Some characteristics are positive in that they help a person get along better in life; others are negative. Employer's look for the same positive characteristics in prospective employees that people look for and respect in others. These characteristics are as important in school and the FFA as they are on the job. Cooperation is the key to making the 5 I's - Initiative, Involvement, Integrity, Image, and Improvement - work for you.

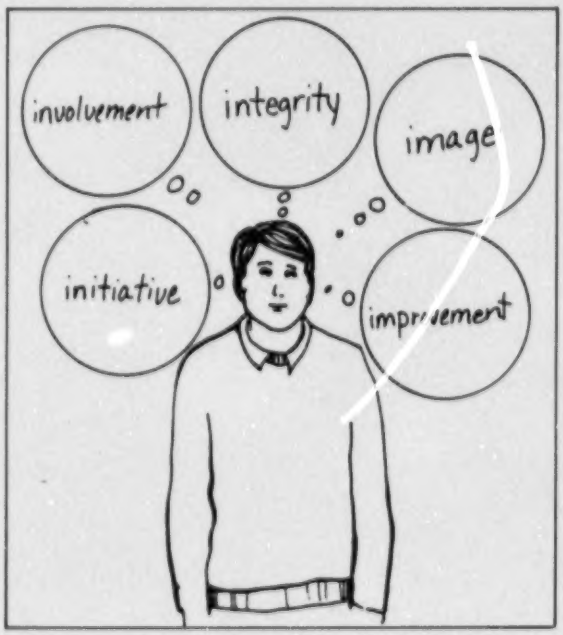
Initiative. Initiative is the ability to start an action and keep it going. It is the ability to find out what needs to be done, without being told, and then doing it without constant supervision. Employers want workers with initiative. They do not want to take all of their own time plus the working time of the employee just to see that things get done. Taking the initiative means learning the job quickly so that your supervisor does not have to instruct you over and over again. Taking the initiative also means seeing that shelves need stocking or the floors need sweeping, then doing those jobs without being told. By helping with some seemingly less important jobs, you will earn the respect of your employer and coworkers, who will give you opportunities for tasks with even more responsibility.

Involvement. Involvement is using time productively to get the most accomplished. When you accept a job, in effect you have agreed to trade your time, skills, etc., for the wages paid. In return, employers expect employees to be actively involved in their work, not just to be on the job. This involvement takes planning and management - planning, to organize how much time is needed for each activity, and management, to use the allotted time efficiently. After planning and managing your time, be flexible enough to be able to rearrange your schedule as needed. With practice, you may be able to finish some tasks more swiftly, affording you extra time for other things. You may be given additional responsibilities which will require you to rearrange your schedule. Time management can also be used in other areas of your life as well. Certain amounts of time are used daily for meals, family chores, recreation, and schoolwork. As you become involved with the FFA, you will need to rearrange your schedule so that you have enough time for meetings and other activities.

Integrity. Integrity involves trust. To many people, someone with integrity is a person who can be trusted with money. However, integrity is more than that. Integrity means that you can be trusted and depended on, whether money is involved or not. Employers like to work with people who have integrity, because they want to have and have to have trust in their employees. The employer cannot watch the employees every moment to make sure that they do not steal time, money, or property. Integrity is also needed in other areas of life as well. Becoming an FFA officer is a great honor, but it involves responsibility as well. Accepting an office obligates you to attend various meetings, perform various duties, and conduct yourself in a proper manner. Not fulfilling these obligations would hurt the chapter and show a lack of integrity on your part.

Image. Your image is how others see you. Your image reflects your attitudes and how you relate to life. People with a positive image are fun to be around - they make you feel comfortable. A person who is angry or unpleasant all the time projects a negative image and makes those around him or her uncomfortable. Employers like to hire people with a positive image. People with a positive image project that image to others they come in contact with. In return those people will think positively about the firm that employee represents.

Improvement. Many times, improvement means learning from your mistakes. It means being able to accept criticism, then using that criticism to improve your performance. Criticism can be positive or negative, but it represents some type of evaluation of what you are doing. Being able to accept criticism is a key to improvement and is a sign of maturity. Accepting criticism often is the difference between improving and remaining the same. An employee who cannot accept criticism may not last long in a job or may remain in the job for a long time without raises and promotions. Try to understand people's criticisms. You need not accept all of it, only that which is true. A responsible person admits that he or she makes mistakes, and then profits from them.



Cooperation is what makes the 5 I's work.

Cooperation. Cooperation is the ability to work with others. It is hard to think of any activity - work, home, school, or play - that does not require some type of cooperation. Cooperation is a key characteristic for you as an individual, for groups you are part of, and for the country. The opposite of cooperation is conflict, which is destructive to any group. Conflict is not the same thing as competition, however. You may compete with your fellow employees in a sales campaign, but at the same time you would want to cooperate with them to help make your employer more successful.

The Importance of Social Skills

Consideration for others is the basis for acceptable social behavior. Guides for social behavior have evolved over the centuries as people have worked and socialized in groups. Appropriate social behavior for a particular situation affects the impression that you make on others. It will make you feel more comfortable in social situations and will help to make those around you more comfortable. Appropriate social behavior involves good manners and grooming and appearance.

Situations Where Good Manners Are Important

A knowledge of good manners makes certain that you know how to act in social situations. Good manners are especially important in travel, in restaurants, and at the table. In addition, there are some general courtesies which are important.

Good manners in travel. When you travel, remember that you represent not only yourself, but also your FFA chapter, and your school. Act in such a manner as to be a credit to those you represent. While traveling, whether on an FFA-related trip, a date, or other social occasions, remembering a few tips will make the trip more pleasant for you, those accompanying you, and those who serve you:

Make prior arrangements.

1. Plan ahead - organize the trip. Make reservations early.
2. If traveling by public transportation, arrive at the station or airport with plenty of time to spare.
3. When boarding a bus, train, or airplane, board quietly and quickly without crowding others. Move quickly to your seat.
4. Keep the seat area clean.
5. If you must leave your seat, say "excuse me." This shows your seatmates that you care about their comfort and convenience.

6. When driving to your destination, allow enough driving time so that you have time for a leisurely drive, then add a little extra time to allow for the unexpected (like a flat tire or not being able to find parking).

7. If someone is to meet you at a specific time and unexpected delays will cause you to be late, call ahead to let them know you will be late.

Start early enough to get there on time, even if the unexpected happens.

8. Thank porters and others who serve you both verbally and with a modest tip.

9. If staying at a motel, check-in will be quick and easy if reservations have been made in advance. Fill out the registration form completely. Notifying the front desk in advance when you are getting ready to leave will allow them to prepare your bill for you, saving you time.

Will you need to make reservations?

Good manners in restaurants.

Good manners in restaurants are similar to travel courtesies in many ways. Keeping these tips in mind will make you more comfortable in a restaurant:

1. Find out if reservations are needed and make them.

2. Wait quietly for the headwaiter or hostess to show you to your table.

3. Generally, older persons are seated first.

4. If your party would like separate checks, request them before ordering.

5. Make your selections from the menu and place the order quietly. Do not change your mind after you order.

6. Express your thanks for the courtesies and services you receive.

7. If you are dissatisfied with the service, do not create a scene. Whisper your comments to the person serving you. (Remember, a good restaurant wants you to repeat as a customer. Losing your repeat business can be a stiff price they pay for poor service.)

8. A tip of 10 to 15 percent of the check is normally left under the edge of the plate for the person serving you. (When a charge card is used, the tip is sometimes added to the total.)

Good manners at the table. The formality and the presence of people they do not know well makes many people uncomfortable when eating in restaurants and at banquets or dinners. Table manners can be learned and practiced to make you feel more comfortable in these settings. These things to remember can help:

1. If in doubt about what is proper (like what silverware to use or whether to eat chicken with your fingers or with knife and fork), follow the lead of the host or hostess.

2. When faced with a formal table setting, begin by using the silver from the outside first.

3. Unfold the napkin, then place it on the lap. While eating, the unused hand should rest on the napkin.

4. Proper eating is generally a matter of being quiet, inconspicuous, and choosing small portions.

5. Keep dishes neat and do not mix foods together on your plate.

6. Bread should be broken in half and buttered one piece at a time.

7. Meat and other foods should be cut into one or two pieces at a time.

8. After using the cutting knife, place it on the edge of the plate, not bridged to the table.

9. Do not rest your elbows on the table, except between courses of the meal.

10. Talk only when your mouth is clear of food.

After using the cutting knife, place it on the edge of the plate.

11. Remove bones or pits from your mouth with thumb and forefinger using your napkin, and place them on the side of your plate as discreetly as possible.

12. Dab your lips with the napkin before drinking from a glass or cup.

13. Some foods require specific techniques:

Soup - Dip the spoon toward the outer edge of the bowl, then sip noiselessly from the side of the spoon. Do not blow on the soup or drink it from the bowl.

Salad - Eat salads with a fork. Lettuce may be cut with a knife into smaller pieces.

Bacon - If it is crisp, bacon is finger food. Otherwise, cut it into pieces with a fork.

Corn on the cob - Hold it firmly with both hands.

Spaghetti - Use a fork in the right hand to twirl the spaghetti against a spoon in the left hand.

Steak - Cut the steak into small, bite-sized portions, one or two at a time.

Olives, celery, fresh fruits, pickles - Use your fingers.

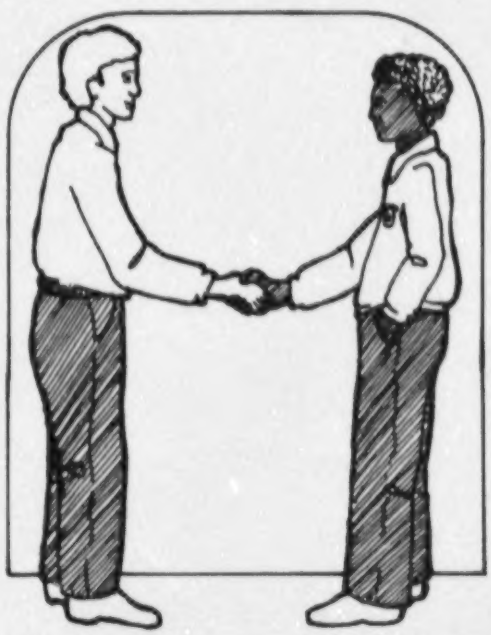
General courtesies. Some general courtesies to remember include:

1. When introducing yourself or being introduced, use a firm handshake and look at the other person directly.

2. Learn how to remember names. Repeat the name in your mind during and after the introduction. Make a practice of using the other person's name in the conversation.

3. Usually, you should stand when someone is introduced to you.

4. The key to dealing with others is to consider other people's feelings as you want your own considered.



When introducing yourself, use a firm handshake and look directly at the other person.

Personal Appearance, Hygiene, and Voice

Wherever you go, you want to make a good and lasting impression. The first impression you make on others is usually the one they remember. If the first impression is a poor one, it will take a great deal of time and effort to change that image of you. This is important to your employability because many potential employers attend important FFA meetings and other meetings. If you make a good impression now, it may help you land a job later.

Your appearance affects the impression you make on others.

Your appearance affects the impression you make on others. If you are poorly dressed, dirty, or sloppy when attending a meeting, you are showing your opinion of yourself and the people at the meeting. Your appearance will be the first thing people will notice about you. They will judge how you look as well as how you act.

Personal hygiene is important for good health as well as for making a good appearance. People who bathe and use deodorant daily are more pleasant to be around. Keeping hair clean and well-groomed, nails and teeth clean, and an erect and alert posture, all pass on a message of health, vitality, and interest.

Clothes also affect the impression you make on others. Styles do change, but wearing clothes that are neat and clean is always in style. Dress for the occasion. A formal occasion requires more formal attire than an informal one. If in doubt as to how to dress, ask the person who invited you. (If you do the inviting, those invited will welcome the suggestion that the meeting is a coat-and-tie, informal, or other type of affair.)

Dress appropriately for the occasion.

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Your voice also affects the impression you make on others. A pleasant speaking voice also helps to create a positive impression. You can have a pleasant voice without sounding like a TV announcer. Practice your speaking. Tape record your voice and replay it. Your voice usually reflects what you are thinking. Does your voice sound sincere? Are you speaking clearly and distinctly, or does it all come out in a mumble?

Just as important as the sound of your voice is what you say. You can probably think of someone whose mouth is always going 100 miles an hour, but whose brain is never in gear at the same time. That person always seems to be afflicted with foot-in-mouth disease. If he or she would think first, then speak, that person might be able to eliminate some of that problem.

Good Citizenship

As a citizen of the United States, you have certain rights and responsibilities. When you accept and perform your responsibilities, you are practicing good citizenship. In a democracy, no one forces you to be a good citizen. It is all up to you. But, for the democracy to work, good citizens must assume their responsibilities. These responsibilities include activities at the local, state, and national levels.

In its simplest form, good citizenship means obeying the law and staying out of trouble. This is largely a passive activity - obeying a set of don'ts: Don't run red lights. Don't steal. Don't litter. Good citizenship goes beyond this, however, to include responsibilities of an active nature. A democracy must have citizens in active roles - from volunteer firefighters or other volunteer workers to elected officials, police, members of the armed forces, etc. - in order to function.

Good citizens are considerate of others.

A citizen must respect the rights of others. Democracy is founded on the idea that one person's rights end when they interfere with the rights of others. Our rights in this country are not absolute. The right to free speech does not give you the right to yell fire in a crowded building if there is no fire. The right of free assembly does not give you the right to meet on someone else's property without permission. The right to free speech means that the speaker must be given the chance to speak - it does not mean that people have to listen.

Most rights are based on common sense and common courtesy. You respect other people's rights by not injuring them (by obeying traffic laws, for example). Respect for other people s property is another responsibility of a good citizen. Yet another area is respect for personal religious beliefs and practices. Respect for state and national symbols is another responsibility of good citizens. Good citizens will also respect the environment. Good citizens will show this respect whether they are being watched or not.

Good citizens do not expect a free ride. They try to make a contribution to their family, organization, community, state, and nation. They strive to be informed about issues so that they can make better decisions about what happens in their lives. Many organizations are concerned with community service. The FFA has a program, Building Our American Communities (BOAC), that emphasizes such work. FFA chapters around the country have improved their communities by improving recreational, educational, or social opportunities locally. This is an example of the active role required of citizens of a democracy.

Good citizens get involved in community service, such as a BOAC tree planting project.

Summary

Developing as a confident, responsible person can help your employability. Employers look for people who have initiative, involvement, integrity, a positive image, the capacity to improve, and can cooperate with others. Developing good social skills is important because these skills influence the impression you make on others. Good grooming will also help to create a positive impression. Good citizenship and leadership go hand in hand because a democracy cannot function without the leadership of good citizens.

Credits:

Harp, R. Thomas. Social Graces. (Leadership and Personal Development Series No. 4. Columbus, OH: Ohio Agricultural Education Curriculum Materials Service, 1974.) Available from: National FFA Supply Service, PO Box 15159, Alexandria, VA 22309.

Stewart, Bob R. Leadership for Agricultural Industry. New York: McGraw Hill, 1978.

Lesson 5: How can I develop better human relations?

When employees lose their jobs, quite often it is not because they lack the physical or mental capacity to do the job, but because they cannot get along with the other employees and their supervisors. In other words, they have the background and training to do the job, but lose the job because they can not get along with other people on the job.

The Importance of Human Relations

Human relations deals with how you get along with others. You have human relations now as you deal with others. These relationships are important because the quality of your human relations helps you to get and keep a job. Human relations is a two-way street, but you only control your end of the street. How you feel and act, however, affects how others feel and act toward you.

Human relations deals with how you get along with others.

Rules affecting human relations may or may not be spelled out. You probably know what the rules are for getting along with others in a classroom. Those rules may not be spelled out so well on the job. In this, and other situations, you will have to figure out what is expected of you from what the other person is like, from the situation, or from past experience. You may find that the way you act based on this decision does not fit everyone. But, if the way you act does not work with most people, examine your own attitudes and behavior. There may be a problem with your approach to human relations. It is easy to sit back and complain and blame others, but only you can change the quality of your human relations.

Everyone has some good human relations skills, but may lack others. By honestly evaluating how you get along with others, then seeking ways to improve, you can improve your human relations skills.

Goals in Developing Better Human Relations

Anyone seeking to develop better human relations should set three basic goals - promoting cooperation, creating a desire to work, and promoting satisfaction with a situation. These goals are also important to good leadership.

Promoting cooperation. Cooperation means working together for a common goal. It is a key to the success of any business, school, FFA chapter, or other venture. You can promote cooperation by being sensitive to the needs and abilities of others.

Creating a desire to work. Group members must be motivated if they are to work together for the good of the group. You can create a desire or motivation to work through a wide variety of rewards and incentives. Not everyone is motivated by the same thing, but people can be motivated to work by the desire to do a good job, by money, by the need for friendship, or by the need to be in charge. Use of one or a mixture of these methods can help to motivate others.

Promoting satisfaction with a situation. Satisfied people work harder, learn more, and get along better with others. They make good employees. Promoting satisfaction may mean spreading dirty or disagreeable jobs around. It may mean praising someone for a job well done - letting them know that their effort is appreciated. It may mean never asking someone to do anything you would not do yourself.

Praise someone who does a good job.

Suggestions to Help You Get Along Better With Others

These suggestions, while they may not work in all situations, should help you to get along better with others:

1. **Think before you speak.** Try to understand the situation before you speak. Try to look at the situation from the other person's vantage point before speaking. Everyone makes mistakes. If it is necessary to criticize, do it tactfully, carefully, and privately. Making fun of others, especially in front of other people, is always bad human relations.

2. **Praise a job well done.** This is always a good idea. Even people who say they do not like praise will respond to praise.

3. **Be interested in others.** Ask others what they are doing or what they are interested in. People enjoy talking about themselves. By showing a sincere interest in others, you may motivate others to become more involved.

4. **Be cheerful and pleasant.** Speak to others. Your silence may be interpreted as dislike. A simple "Hello, how are you?" costs little and may uncover someone who wants you as a friend.

5. **Let your strong points speak for themselves.** Do not brag. Say what you can do, then do it. If you do a good job, you will be given additional responsibilities. Actions often speak louder than words.

6. **Consider others' feelings.** If a normally cheerful person is in a bad mood, there is probably a good reason for it. You may want to ask what is wrong, but do not pry. Respect a desire to be left alone.

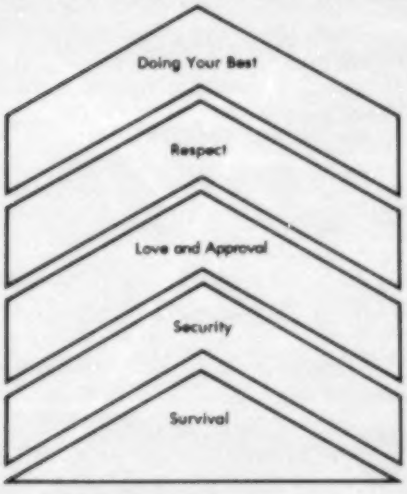
7. **Keep your promises.** Much business is still done on the basis of a word and a handshake. If you do not keep your word, people lose trust in you. Do not promise something you cannot or will not deliver on.

8. **Do not demand praise.** If you do a good job, praise will come your way. Be satisfied that you are doing a good job and that your work is being noticed. Some supervisors think that too much praise is not good.

9. **Do not take comments or criticisms personally.** Ignore occasional ill-natured remarks. Try to understand the other person - the comments may reflect a problem of the person making them. If such comments become unbearable, tell the other person how you feel. Talk the situation over with a teacher, a supervisor, or a friend. Try to find a solution to the problem.

Basic Human Needs

Suggestions like the ones mentioned on the previous page may help you develop better human relations. But, there is no substitute for understanding people. If you understand their wants and needs, why they act the way they do, and what they want from you, you will know how to improve your human relations.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Before you can understand other people, you need to understand yourself. Dr. Abraham Maslow, a noted psychologist, has developed a theory that describes five basic human needs. This theory, called Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs", says that all actions are a result of these basic needs. The theory describes a hierarchy, or order, in which these needs must be met. The illustration below shows these needs in the order Maslow describes.

Survival. Maslow describes the need to survive as a person's primary concern. A person who skips meals, gets too little sleep, or does not dress warmly enough, is likely to be irritable or have a short attention span because the need for survival has not been met. Keeping healthy is critical to the need for survival.

Security. Security means freedom from fear. Once survival needs have been met, a person will try to satisfy the need to be free from fear. This security may be financial, as provided by a job; it may be emotional, as provided by a network of friends who give emotional and social support.

Love and approval. After the survival and security needs have been met, the next level of need is that of love and approval. To meet this need, you may have family or close friends that you are close to and share things with. You may participate in activities because they bring pleasure and approval from your friends.

Respect. The next basic need is that of respect. Respect from others comes from hard work and doing a good job.

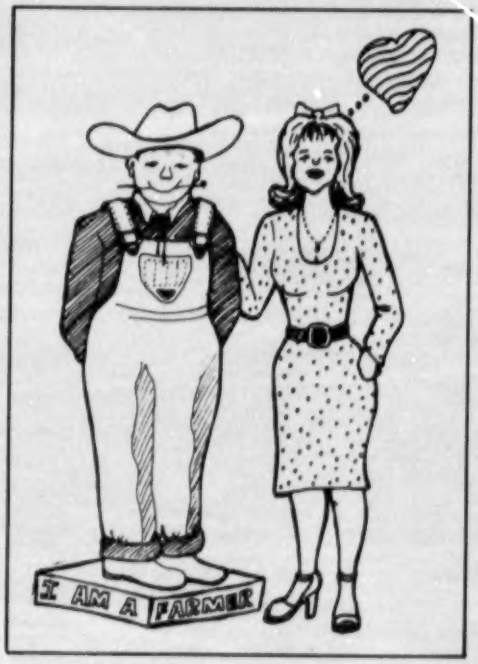
Doing your best. After satisfying their other needs, people work at what Maslow calls "self-realization" or doing their best. Self-realization means that a person's potential has been realized.

Stereotypes and Prejudice

Knowing that all people have the same needs and characteristics will help us do away with stereotypes. A stereotype is a blanket judgment about classes of people. Stereotypes abound in our society. Many of these stereotypes, unfortunately, are perpetuated by the way people are portrayed on television. However, that does not make them true. Some examples of stereotypes include the "hick farmer" or the "dumb blonde."

Stereotypes are often the basis of prejudice. Prejudice means prejudging people before you know them. Prejudice is usually a way to put people down and make them feel small. Prejudice tars everyone in a group with the same brush. Statements like, "All city people . . . .", or "All country people . . . .", or "All older people . . . ." usually signal prejudice.

Because everyone has the same needs and characteristics, quite often the person who puts down others puts himself or herself down as well. When someone puts you down, you can see that prejudiced statements just do not hold water. How did you feel when someone reacted to you with prejudice?



Stereotypes are seldom, if ever, true.

Dealing With Prejudice

To deal with prejudice, first start with yourself. What stereotypes do you accept? You may have a fat friend who is jolly. Does that mean that the stereotype is true? Of course not. The real tragedy of a stereotype is that people do not look beyond the stereotype. They dismiss a fat person as jolly, but fail to see that the same person may be witty, sad, hard-working, stingy, intelligent, talented, and sometimes angry. The fact that the person is a mixture of all of those things make him or her a far more interesting person than the stereotype would indicate.

Prejudices often serve as the basis for unfair treatment, or discrimination. Discrimination often affects women or minorities, such as Blacks, Spanish-Americans, American Indians, Jews, Eastern Europeans, Italians, and Orientals. Prejudice and discrimination also affect the aged and the handicapped.

Thinking of all people as individuals with special needs, not as members of a certain group is one way to reduce your own prejudices. Realize that those other people have needs just as you do. Treat them just as you would any other person. One note of caution, however. Bending over backward to avoid discriminating can be just as humiliating as outward discrimination - and just as prejudiced. All the other person asks is that they be treated just like everyone else is treated.

Dealing with prejudice against yourself is often difficult.

Dealing with prejudice against yourself is often difficult. It is hard not to become defensive, but it is also important not to overreact. Dealing with discrimination may require all of your human relations skills to cope with the situation. If you are faced with discrimination on the job, first talk to the person involved. Be calm and mature - do not confront. You may be able to work the problem out together. If you get no satisfaction through this, talk to your supervisor. Your company may have an established grievance procedure to deal with the problem.

Summary

Improving human relations is not an easy job. It is important to do so, however, because human relations help you get and keep a job. The three basic goals of better human relations are to promote cooperation, create a desire to work,

and promote satisfaction with a situation. To improve human relations you must understand others' needs of survival, security, love and approval, respect, and doing their best - which are the same needs that you have. A final step in improving your human relations is to avoid stereotypes and prejudices.

Credit:

Stewart, Bob R. Leadership for Agricultural Industry. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978.